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Cover illustration: Great Hornbill Buceros bicornis by Kamol Komolphalin

Editorial

This is the sixth and final OBC bulletin that I shall be personally responsible for. In my first (the club's third) as in this last, the rediscovery of a dramatic Oriental species after a long and worrying absence is a major item of news. Schneider's Pitta Pitta schneideri, a Sumatran endemic, has been sighted for the first time for over 70 years.

It strikes me that such items of information serve to illustrate, almost paradoxically, the large gaps that remain in our knowledge of the region's avifauna, and also the equally large advances that are now being made in Oriental ornithology. I hope that in some way the Club's bulletin has reflected this situation: the strength of current interest, the range of new discoveries, and at the same time, the extent of the Orient's unknown territory.

I have no doubt that it will continue to do this under my successor, Helen Taylor, who has already played a major part over the last three years in bulletin production. I wish to thank her for that effort, and also my other colleagues - Richard Grimmett, Tim Inskipp, Rod Martins, Nigel Redman, and Craig Robson - whose collective assistance has made all the bulletins possible.

In addition, we wish to acknowledge the authors and artists who have contributed to this issue; and thank the typists, Julie Gray and Clare Billington.

Club News

1988 AGM in London

The 1988 AGM will be held at the Zoological Society of London on the 10 December starting at 13hr30. Full details are provided with this bulletin.

Oriental Artist of the Year

Interested in an annual competition, 'Oriental Artist of the Year'? The idea comes from OBC Representative in Thailand, Philip Round, and is based on the well-known competition in the UK-based monthly magazine British Birds. The intention is to encourage bird illustration by nationals in the Orient and help them gain international recognition. We have decided to run the competition next year as a trial; and if there is sufficient interest, we will look for a sponsor and try and make it an annual event. The illustrations should be in black ink on a white surface and of a size which is suitable for reproduction in the OBC Bulletin (no larger than 12 cm x 15 cm). The competition is open only to nationals from or living in the Orient; the closing date is 1 September 1989. Entries will be reproduced in the bulletin and displayed at the Club's AGM in

London. Entrants should say if they would like OBC to offer pictures for sale (and give a price) or would like their work returned.

OBC Sales Offers Birds of Java

This new field guide, by John MacKinnon, will be available shortly from OBC. It is the first comprehensive field guide to cover this interesting and species-rich island. The provisional price is £16, including postage, and all orders should be sent to the Sales Officer at OBC.

Apology to some Members

OBC has experienced a number of problems with its membership administration during 1988. We believe these have been resolved, but it has meant that some members have not received their bulletin and journal on time. To those affected, we are sorry about this, and apologise for any inconvenience caused.

Successful Norfolk Meeting

OBC had another successful meeting in Norfolk, UK. Over 120 members turned up to hear Steve Madge talk about his observations of Oriental birds in Siberia, and take part in a mystery slides and sounds competition (which was won by Jon Eames). The art exhibition included paintings by Carl da Silva from India (well known for his illustrations in BNHS publications) and Martin Woodcock, and proved to be very popular. The meeting and art exhibition will be repeated again next year.

Forktail IV out Soon

The next issue of Forktail, which promises to be a bumper issue, is expected to be out at the beginning of 1989. It will be sent to all members paid-up for 1988.

News and Views

SCHNEIDER'S PITTA REDISCOVERED

Schneider's Pitta Pitta schneideri which is endemic to Sumatra and may be confined to isolated peaks of the Barisan Range in West Sumatra has been rediscovered. This constitutes the first documented record of the species for over 70 years. The species was discovered this autumn by Phil Hurrell in the Kerinci-Seblat National Park. The National Park is believed by WWF and IUCN to be one of the most threatened national parks in Asia; the threat coming largely from illegal encroachment to increase agricultural land.

TAMAN NEGARA - UPDATE

In spring 1987 there was an article, entitled Taman Negara Saved from Road (Bull. OBC 5; 8), announcing the rescue of the national park from a road-building scheme following a campaign by environmentalists. This has since sparked off other events pertaining to the park's future development as a whole. Moreover, those involved see a role for criticism by special-interest visitors if it can be set in perspective. Hence this follow-up item.

At present, the only tourist access to Taman Negara is via the headquarters complex at Kuala Tahan, on its south-east border, 55 km up the Tembeling River by longboat or, since 1987, by light plane to a new airstrip, thence by boat for the last few kilometres. From Kuala Tahan, the minimum round-trip time to the summit of Gunung Tahan (highest point in the park) is five days via a walking trail up the Tahan Valley. With a view to boosting park tourism, the Federal government decided to shorten the trip time with a jeep track to the foot of the mountain. Several routes were explored with eventual selection of the Tahan Valley itself - responsibility for construction being handed to the army.

By then, environmental impact assessment of projects on this scale had become mandatory under Malaysian law and a consultancy contract was awarded to WWF Malaysia for a brief study. Its report to government made three fundamental points:

1) Apart from obviously necessary remedial measures no development projects should be undertaken outside the context of a land-use master-plan for the park as a whole, and that preparation of such a plan be given top priority.

2) Urgent remedial work was needed on the mountain itself as an outcome of increasing tourist pressure (erosion of the already over-used mountain trail had progressed to the point where some steep sections were positively dangerous, and fuel wood cutting and littering of the delicate upper montane zone were out of control). Army proposals for repairing and upgrading the trail beyond the projected roadhead, and provision of permanent cabins on the mountain were strongly backed.

3) If it were decided to proceed with the road regardless of alignment, details and design must be overhauled to avoid gross negative impacts on the valley, and park staff must be in a supervisory position throughout.

Independent of this study, the Malayan Nature Society and the Malaysian Mountaineering Association jointly submitted an unsolicited report advocating a fresh look at alternative routes to the opposite foot of the mountain. Following rapidly on these submissions, all three NGOs together with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) were charged with producing recommendations for the comprehensive improvement of tourism facilities and opportunities in and around Kuala Tahan. This third document was drawn up by November 1986. In the event, at the end of the year the Tahan Valley project was dropped and with it the needed action on Gunang Tahan - even though many felt the army could have achieved the latter on its own account using helicopters. Shortly thereafter, Kuala Tahan facilities were 'privatised', with unfortunate results, as anyone who visited in late 1987 will testify. Management of the park itself remained in the hands of DWNP and, as expected, DWNP was soon given the job of producing a more-or-less instant park master-plan and together with the army, and in consultation with NGOs, of reinvestigating a western road route. From among several alternatives, the route now favoured runs from the railway line at Merapoh east through logged forest to the western park boundary where a new, full-scale tourist facility will be set up, with Kuala Tahan-style trail system, etc. From there, a tarmac-sealed and drained road (rather than a jeep track) will run 12 km into the park, mostly over flat land but crossing one difficult ridge to end at Kuala Juram, two days' walk from the top of the mountain. Facilities here, it is understood, will be exclusively overnight accommodation for climbers, who will be able to make a roughly three-day round trip to the summit via a new walking trail.

DWNP plans to restrict wheeled traffic on the part of the road inside the park to its own vehicles, which should help keep down noise disturbance. The most heartening news, however, is that the western route plan includes regulating of activities on the mountain itself, as recommended. Free camping will be banned and all climbers will use permanent cabins with fuel and rubbish disposal arrangements provided. The shortened distance will also make it possible for park staff to service the trail routinely.

Release of funds for the project was announced in June and majority NGO opinion now is that, on balance, it should be carried out if possible. Negative impacts of the road itself (not great if it is kept narrow, sealed, and drained as planned, and overhead shade is maintained) should be outweighed by the arresting of degradation on the mountain. This assumes, of course, that action will extend to the original (present) eastern flank trail, which will remain in use, but on that point DWNP is still silent.

If any lesson at all has been learned over the past year it is that the most risky action in Taman Negara from now on is going to be non-action - and this is by no means merely a smart exit line. The real emergency is that preparation of a master-plan containing all the environmental information necessary for dependable, long-term land-use zoning is still outstanding.

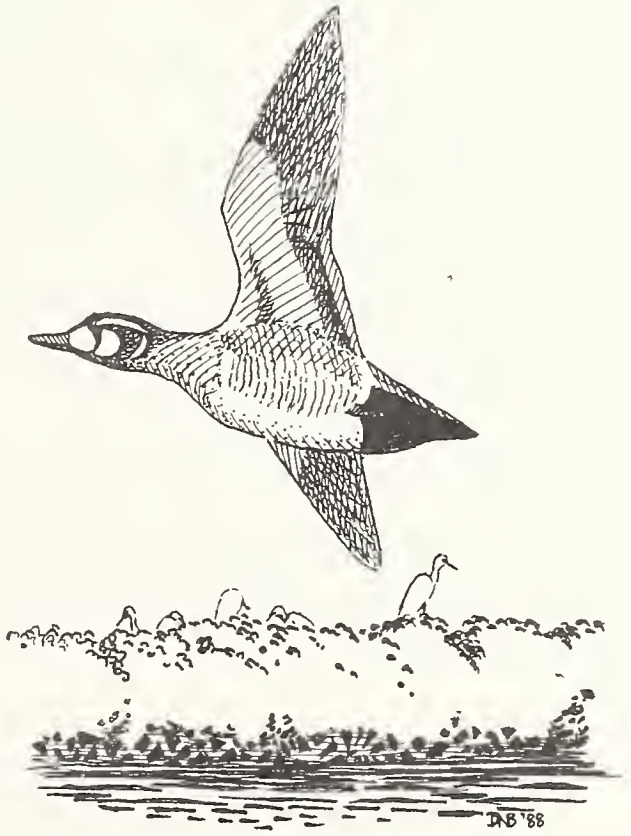
(contributed by D.H. Wells)

THREATENED PARTRIDGES IN CHINA

Recent visits to China by Ben King have provided valuable but disturbing information concerning two of China's three endemic and endangered Arborophila partridges. In spring 1987, King visited Huang Nian Shan in southern Sichuan where he found a healthy population of Sichuan Hill Partridge Arborophila rufipectus in a fine tract (c. 800 ha) of primary forest. However, this area is unprotected and there are plans to log the forest and replace it with a tree farm within 15 years. A year later, King located the White-eared Partridge Arborophila ardens, which is endemic to Hainan. This good news was tempered by the fact that most of the island's forests have been destroyed, while logging, hunting, and trapping continue at a rapid pace. Protection measures for both birds are clearly an urgent priority for conservationists in China.
(Source: King, B. in press. Birds observed at Huang Nian Shan, Mabian county, southern Sichuan, China. Forktail 4; Kingbird News No. 13.)

BIRDS TO WATCH IN THE ORIENT

The International Council for Bird Preservation has recently published a global review of threatened birds. The results are alarming: around 1,000 bird species, over 11 per cent of all birds, are to varying degrees threatened with global extinction. An analysis of the number of threatened species each country supports is equally disturbing:
Indonesia came first with 126 species (Brazil has 121), China is third (81), India is sixth (62), while the Philippines and Thailand are ninth and tenth (42 and 39 respectively). All the other countries in the top ten are in South America. The Orient, which is represented by 293 species in the list, proved to be the most difficult region for the authors to research, mainly because the distribution of so many of its species is very poorly known and there is an absence of recent information (about species and habitat) for large parts of the region. OBC members can clearly make a real contribution here; a second edition is planned, and ICBP would welcome details of observations new or old of any of the species listed in the book.



Baikal Teal Anas formosa.
Drawing by Dave Bakewell.

(Source: Collar, N.J. and Andrew, P. (1988). Birds to Watch: The ICBP world check-list of threatened birds. ICBP Tech. Pub. No. 8.)

EXTINCTION THREAT TO COCKATOO

The Salmon-crested Cockatoo Cacatua moluccensis, a large and distinctive species, is being severely threatened by excessive trapping for the parrot trade in Seram, Indonesia.

Endemic to Seram and the small satellite islands of Saparua, Haruku, and possibly Ambon[3], the species was formerly considered to be common in the lowlands and was recorded in small flocks as recently as 1980[2] ranging up to 1000 m.

Fieldwork conducted as part of the Operation Raleigh Seram expedition (20 July - 25 September) within the Manusela National Park, revealed that the species is now very scarce and absent from large areas of suitable habitat. In 40 days of fieldwork only 54 sightings were made, referring to a maximum of 20 individuals. Encounter rates were the lowest for any parrot species with 0.3 recorded per hour of search effort in lowland rain forest (c. 100 m altitude) and 0.1 per hour in transition lowland/sub-montane forest (600-900 m altitude), while the largest group size encountered was two. These results are particularly alarming in that the Manusela National Park covers some 11 per cent of Seram's surface and is the only area in which the species receives any form of official protection.

The reason for this sudden decline in abundance is largely the rapid increase in the trade of this species since the late 1970s. Recorded international trade rose from 3,096 in 1981 to 9,639 in 1984 with a slight drop to 8,840 in 1985[1]. The Directorate of Nature Conservation for Indonesia (PPA) sets yearly quotas for the legal harvest of this species. In 1987 the quota was set at 5,000 but, judging by the numbers of birds taken from the island on regular ferries, it is quite likely that this figure was exceeded, while the PPA appear to have little control over the number of birds taken from the wild.

The use of regular roost sites enables the cockatoos to be trapped very readily with simple nylon monofilament foot snares. It is clear that urgent action is required in the immediate future to reduce this trade dramatically if the species is not to be hunted out completely.

One major breakthrough to reduce trade came in March when the European Community announced a total ban on imports of the species from the wild until further notice. The European Community had been an important consumer with 1,270 (14 per cent of the world total) imported in 1985 alone.[1] However, a large market still exists for the species elsewhere (78 per cent imported by the USA) and immediate action is required within Indonesia to reduce trade if the species is not to be lost.

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(contributed by J. Bowler)

Brian Hodgson:
Profile of a Pioneer

The frequency with which Brian Hodgson's name appears in Oriental-bird nomenclature, is a measure of his importance in the region's ornithology. Yet probably very few people have ever stopped to reflect on the personality behind the patronymics. Here, Mark Cocker gives a brief outline of this enigmatic figure, the range of his achievements, and the problems he overcame to pursue his pioneer interest in the natural history of the Himalayas.

Of the four principal ornithologists working in British India in the nineteenth century that are named in the introduction to the 'Handbook' - Blyth, Hodgson, Hume, and Jerdon - probably the least known is the second, Brian Houghton Hodgson. He was not, like Blyth, primarily a man of science, nor did he produce a major work on Indian birds, as the other two had done. Yet a glance through the index of scientific names in Ali and Ripley[1] will reveal that more birds bear his name than that of anyone else.

In spite of a biography[3] (albeit a heavily biased and rather superficial account) and a large collection of manuscripts, paintings, letters, and notes, held in both Asian and European libraries, Hodgson's personality remains largely hidden. It seems he was a retiring, scholarly, almost ascetic man with a strong sense of dignity that deepened during his years of isolation in Nepal, and which occasionally spilled over into his scientific papers in expressions of wounded pride, or in spirited academic jousts with his fellow scientists. He was a loner and acquired the nickname - Hermit of the Himalayas. In his extremely long life of 94 years (1800-1894) he married three times: firstly to a Kashmiri Muslim, and in middle age, after her death, to two English ladies, latterly Susan Townshend, an aunt of George Bernard Shaw's wife, Charlotte.

As a young man in Calcutta he had shown early promise and was destined to rise quickly in the East India Company's civil service. However, an inability to withstand the climate and illnesses necessitated, from 1820 onwards, his exile in the Himalayas. The British Residency in Kathmandu, capital of the fiercely independent Gurkha kingdom of Nepal, proved an ideal resort for the young convalescent, but from a geographical and professional point of view Hodgson was now isolated from the mainstream of political activity in British India.

Perhaps as a response to the severe checks imposed upon his career Hodgson poured his enormous intellectual energy into other fields of endeavour, for which Nepal provided an abundance of opportunities. Dense forest, malaria swamps, and wandering troupes of brigands, known as dacoits, proved effective barriers to any kind of European penetration, while the Nepalese government, deeply suspicious of its powerful foreign neighbours, rigorously excluded British

visitors. Hodgson was therefore one of only a handful of his countrymen who had ever seen Nepal, let alone studied its fauna.

His ornithological reputation, as far as it goes, rests on two things: the large collection of bird skins he amassed and donated to scientific institutions in both India and Britain, and the natural history papers, numbering almost 150, published in a variety of prominent journals, principally the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. However, there are other lesser-known aspects of his work that are of equal value and often greater interest, such as his large collection of water-colour paintings of birds, and the mass of unpublished ornithological notes he made on appearance, behaviour, and distribution. To obtain a full sense of his achievement, it is also valuable to view his work against the scientific background of the early nineteenth century, and to take account of the peculiar difficulties that obstructed him.

When he arrived for the second time in Nepal in 1822, natural history was a science still very much in its infancy. The theory of evolution and the large body of ideas surrounding speciation are the foundation of the contemporary study of nature. But Hodgson had none of these to guide him. In many ways, therefore, his efforts must always have been educated guesses. Testimony to the high standard of his observations and to his fine intelligence is the number of times he was right. Yet he had had minimal schooling in the study of nature, and owing to his isolation, enjoyed only a personal library. His sole means of discussing and sharing his ideas with fellow enthusiasts was via an extremely slow and unreliable mail service. Equally, one must remember that his primary purpose for being in the country was to act as a representative of the British administration based in Calcutta. In the fullest sense of the word, therefore, Hodgson was an amateur.

There were also other physical and political impediments which he had to negotiate in order to pursue his hobby. For example, in an attempt to restrict any foreign intelligence-finding operations, the Gurkha government confined the small British community in Kathmandu to the city and the surrounding valley - a mere 240 sq km out of Nepal's total 140,000 - thus sealing off from Hodgson the vast majority of this richly forested country. However, even if he had been granted permission to travel freely in Nepal, any movements would have been at best problematic, since there were no roads, no vehicles - apart from horses or extremely slow-moving litters - and no maps. The terrain itself was mountainous in the north and malarial in the south, and everywhere cloaked in dense forest. The Nepalese themselves, an admixture of martial clans and tribes, were famed for their toughness, and particularly in the lowlands, banditry was common.

Given these problems, it is not surprising that most of Hodgson's collecting was done for him by Nepalese or Indian trappers and skinners. Their efforts, under his guidance resulted in one of the largest and most significant collections made by any individual in the Indian subcontinent. Totalling 9,512 specimens, it was divided between two distinct periods: the 23 years of his residence in Nepal, from 1820-43; and then the 14 years he lived in Darjeeling as a private citizen, between 1844-57. Of the 672 species he gathered, 124 were new to science, although Hodgson himself gained the credit for only 81.

His contribution to exclusively Nepalese ornithology is even greater. Only 59 species of his entire collection originated from outside the Himalayan kingdom. The remaining 613 species constitute almost three-quarters of Nepal's

current list of birds[2]. Simply to name a handful of the species Hodgson first discovered is perhaps a good way to indicate the fullness of his contribution: Mountain Hawk-Eagle Spizaetus nipalensis, Snow Partridge Lerwa lerwa, Forest Eagle Owl Bubo nipalensis, Tawny Fish Owl Ketupa flavipes, Blue-bearded Bee-Eater Nyctyornis athertoni, Rufous-necked Hornbill Aceros nipalensis, Bay Woodpecker Blythipicus pyrrhotis, Upland Pipit Anthus sylvanus, Maroon-backed Accentor Prunella immaculata, Indian Blue Robin Luscinia brunnea, Golden Bush-Robin Tarsiger chrysaeus, and Sultan Tit Melanochlora sultanea. It is remarkable to think that today the discovery of only one or two of these species would secure a reputation, yet these twelve birds represent only one tenth of Hodgson's firsts.

There were also other achievements - although he gained little credit for these - such as his interest in the behaviour and ecology of the living bird. Hitherto, natural historians had concentrated on taxonomy, invariably worked out whilst sat at a museum bench. For all his active career Hodgson struggled persistently to subvert the assumption - an assumption, which to him, seemed based solely on professional arrogance - that one can best come to learn about birds from examining their dried skins. He was an active field man and wrote copiously on habitat and altitude preferences, migration, behaviour, and diet. A bird which particularly fascinated him was the Bengal Florican Houbaropsis bengalensis, and he paid Nepalese shikarees to observe and record the bird's curious courtship and breeding behaviour. Even today his work on this subject remains an important contribution. Similarly with the Red Panda Ailurus fulgens, his paper on the behaviour of this elusive animal remains of primary importance. And so the list goes on in almost all branches of natural history for, quite literally, Hodgson was interested in anything that moved. The remarkable thing about so much of his study was that, while it was of a pioneering nature and completed sometimes over 150 years ago, it retains contemporary relevance.

Quite clearly, there was sufficient merit in his papers and in the size and novelty of much of his collection to secure him an international reputation as a naturalist. Indeed, he received numerous awards and was made an honorary member of several European and British scientific societies. Yet his entire scientific work was like an

Brian Hodgson. Drawing by Craig Robson.

iceberg - beneath a small, exposed crown lay concealed the massive bulk of his efforts. Volumes of manuscript notes and thousands of water-colour paintings had been prepared and collected over 15 years for the purpose of producing a major, multi-volumed work on Nepalese fauna. Prepared for him by Oriental artists (sadly the names of only two, Raj Man Singh and Tursmoney Chitterhar, are about all that is known of these highly talented men), the paintings were of an exceptional standard, and even today constitute one of the finest collections of Asian bird paintings. Tragically, however, the project was never to be completed. Approaches to John Gould in 1836, when the latter was already a celebrated artist, came to nothing and for the next 30 years Hodgson searched in vain for a means of publishing his book.

This brief outline of Hodgson's ornithological career must inevitably omit all his work on Nepalese anthropology, history, geography, and his study of Mahayana Buddhism, in which fields, particularly the first and the last, he achieved an equally high, if not higher reputation. Similarly, one can only pause to make brief mention of the importance of his work in other areas of natural history, especially his study and collections of mammals, of which he added 30 new species.

Querulous, occasionally arrogant, always strong-minded, Hodgson fell out with Lord Ellenborough, the Governor General of India in 1843 and was more or less dismissed from his post as Resident in Nepal. Yet a short trip to England in that year only confirmed his attachment to the Himalayas and in 1844 he was back. This second period, in a secluded mountain retreat above Darjeeling, was one of uninterrupted scholarship, and the apogee of his reputation. In the mid nineteenth century he was the pre-eminent authority on all things Himalayan, and his correspondents included some of the foremost scientists and scholars of his age, like Darwin, Hooker, Max Müller, and Eugene Burnouf.

Even today he still remains the single most important naturalist to have worked in the Himalayas. However, in purely ornithological terms it is more difficult to calculate his importance. In many ways he is as significant for what he never achieved as for that which he did. Certainly, if he had produced his intended magnum opus - a work planned on the scale of Gould's Birds of Europe, but with substantially more text - he would perhaps have been the foremost of the quartet of pioneering Anglo-Indian ornithologists. As it is he is a highly talented, fascinating figure, whose work has been sadly neglected, and whose personality and motives remain elusive.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Carol Inskipp for allowing me to draw on her extensive researches into Hodgson's ornithological work in the preparation of this article.

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New Observations on Hornbills and Logging in Malaysia

Andrew Johns' study of hornbill populations in Malaysia raises the heartening possibility that these spectacular, fruit-eating specialists are able to adapt and thrive even in the country's logged-over rainforests.

Hornbills Bucerotidae, are among the noisiest and most conspicuous of rainforest birds. As many as eight species may occur sympatrically in the forests of the Malay Peninsula (West Malaysia). Some are nomadic and some territorial. Their specialisation in diets consisting mostly of large fruits means that they occupy very large home ranges and travel long distances on a daily basis. This in turn implies a vulnerability to forest destruction: hornbills are generally unable to persist in small forest patches[1,5].

Great Hornbill Buceros bicornis (drawing by Kamol Komolphalin)

If hornbills are unable to persist in areas where forests are being cleared, does this mean that they are becoming restricted to national parks and equivalent reserves, of which there are precious few? Fortunately, no.

Table 1 Estimated densities of hornbills at the Tekam Forest Reserve

Species	Average group size	GROUPS/sq km Years elapsed since logging: 0	1-2	3-4	5-6	6-7	7-8	9-10	11-12
Area surveyed (1979-81) Area surveyed (1987)		C13C	C5A	C1A	C2	C13C	C5A	C1A	C2
Wreathed Hornbill Rhyticeros undulatus	2	0.7	0.2	0.8	0.2	1.1	0.2	0.9	0.8
Wrinkled Hornbill R. corrugatus	1.5				0.6			0.2	3.3
Helmeted Hornbill Rhinoplax vigil	1.5	1.7	0.2	2.1	0.5	1.1	1.5	1.2	p
Rhinoceros Hornbill Buceros rhinoceros	2	1.6	1.8	1.2	0.4	3.0	2.1	1.4	0.8
Great Hornbill B. bicornis	2	p				0.4			
Black Hornbill Anthracoceros malayanus	2.5				0.5				1.7
White-crowned Hornbill Berenicornis comatus	3	0.1			0.1			0.2	0.3
Bushy-crested Hornbill Anorrhinus galeritus	5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.5	1.1	0.6	0.9	p

p = present, but not observed during surveys.
All surveys were undertaken during the dry season (February to September).

To support the lucrative timber trade, many countries in South-East Asia maintain forested land in a productive state: the land is logged selectively on a cyclic basis. Only the largest trees of certain species are cut in each cycle, but damage is very high; usually about 50 per cent of standing trees are killed[4]. Many observers have noted that hornbills often occur in these productive forest reserves, despite the degradation of the habitat caused by logging.

In order to quantify the survival ability of hornbills in logged-over forest I have begun surveying a particularly species-rich population on a periodic basis. The population chosen is within the Tekam Forest Reserve, in the centre of the Malay Peninsula (Figure 1), an area which began to be logged in 1975. Results now cover unlogged forest and forests logged up to 12 years previously: all part of a very extensive forested region.

Population densities in logged forest

Calculated population densities (Table 1) show a somewhat patchy distribution of species. The Great Hornbill seems to be restricted to steep land in the west of the forest reserve; the Wrinkled and Black Hornbills are lowland specialists[6] and are restricted to the flatter areas in the east.

Because of their long-distance ranging patterns, the abundance of species at any site is erratic, dependent upon stachistic patterns of fruiting-tree abundance. Taking the four common species, however, it is apparent that there is no consistent decrease in numbers following logging (either between all sites, or between the forest reserve as a whole as surveyed in the two study periods).

These data are of particular importance in that the forests surveyed during 1987 were up to 25 km from unlogged forest. This is too great a distance for territorial species (all except Wreathed Hornbill and Wrinkled Hornbills) to be able to move into unlogged forest if faced with periodic food shortages. In other words, the hornbills were able to persist solely within logged-over forest as little as ten years after logging operations (which typically caused the loss of half of the trees in the forest and up to three-quarters of some of their preferred food trees: notably fig trees Ficus). Not only that, but they appear able to maintain their former numbers, unlike certain other bird species[2].

Use of cocoa plantation

If hornbills are not able to range between logged and unlogged forest, are they perhaps obtaining extra food from plantation areas? Surveys in cocoa plantations around the fringe of the Tekam Forest Reserve showed that only two forest species were regularly present, the White-crowned Hornbill and Black Hornbills. The Black Hornbill was restricted to strips of riverine forest occurring through the plantations; only the White-crowned Hornbill fed within the plantations, eating seeds from fallen cocoa fruit and various lizards and large insects common in the ground debris. Exploitation of cocoa seeds (which contain large quantities of alkaloids and are mildly hallucinogenic) is highly unusual among animals.

Most rainforest hornbills do not, therefore, appear to be using plantation areas on a regular basis. Equally, the reverse is not true. A disturbed-habitat specialist, the Pied Hornbill Anthracoceros albirostris, was not recorded from the forested area in 1979-81, but by 1987 was beginning to encroach along the margins of the permanent access roads.

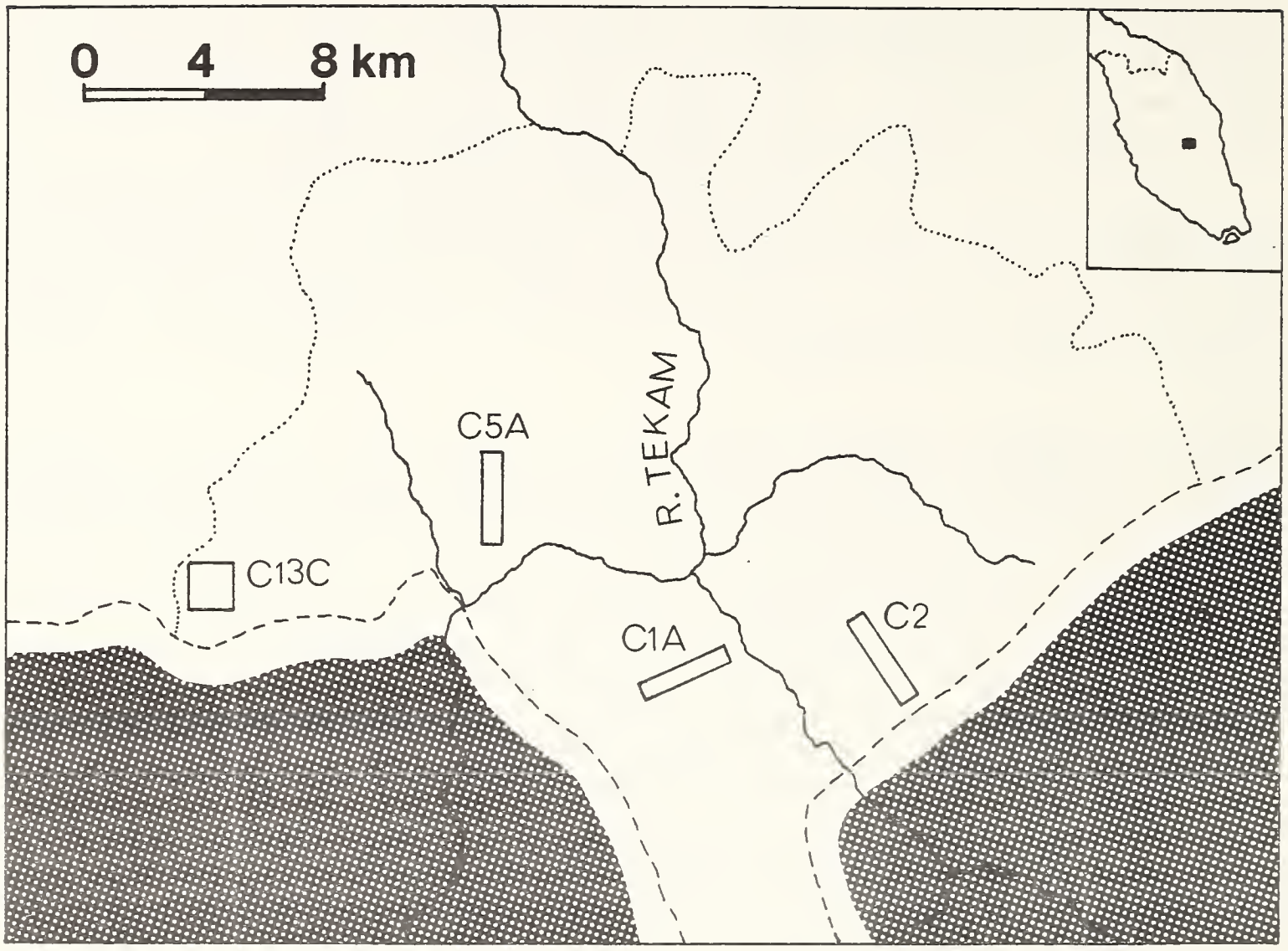

Figure 1. Location of survey sites within the Tekam Forest Reserve. Shaded areas are clear-felled forest, now under cocoa plantations; all remaining land is logged-over forest. The area logged before 1981 is delimited by the dotted line. Boxed areas represent the survey sites.

Reasons for survival

These observations offer further support for earlier conclusions[3] that although logged-over forests may not be ideal habitat for hornbills they are able to persist within it remarkably well. Why this should be so is unclear, but since they are not obviously changing either diets or foraging strategies it suggests that the loss of food resources caused by logging is not critical. Hornbills may have to travel further between food trees, but this is within their capabilities. Since most big food trees exploited by hornbills produce a superabundance of fruit there is no apparent intensification of competition, despite a higher number of individuals exploiting each tree.

The above observations pose questions about what is regulating hornbill numbers at a low level in unlogged forest. The availability of breeding sites has sometimes been considered a limiting factor, but has never been proved to be so. There are no data to suggest that breeding sites (large tree holes) are more

or less abundant in logged-over forest. Certainly new sites are created during logging by damage caused to remnant old trees[3]. Many species of hornbill were observed breeding in logged forests, including the Helmeted Hornbill, which has been considered the most vulnerable to elimination by logging[3].

Hornbills do not generally feed from early colonising plant species (only the Black Hornbill does so occasionally) and are thus reliant on remnant, tall forest trees. If the regeneration of these tree species is curtailed in logged-over forest this will eventually affect the density of hornbills. Forestry procedures involving the poisoning of some of the remnant food trees (which are not of commercial interest to foresters) will act to reduce their abundance more immediately. Poisoning operations have been out of favour in Malaysia in recent years, but new experimental procedures are to be tested at Tekam Forest Reserve, beginning in 1988. The effects of these operations will be monitored. Watch this space!

Acknowledgements

My thanks to WWF International, WWF Malaysia, the National Environmental Research Council (UK) and the Royal Society, who together funded surveys in 1987. The Forest Research Institute of Malaysia kindly provided help in the field. Drs D.R. Wells and M. Kavanagh provided useful discussion, as always.

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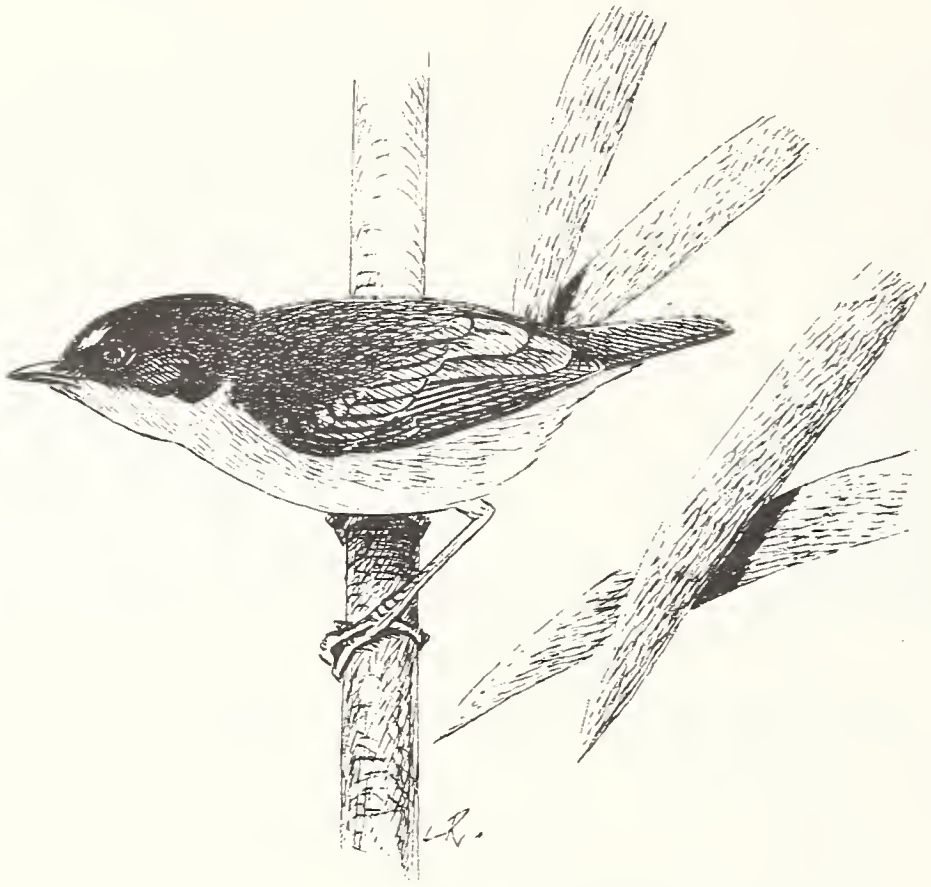
Little-known Oriental Bird

Rusty-bellied Shortwing

Apart from a minimum of specimens, a handful of largely old records, and a sketch impression of its behaviour, the Rusty-bellied Shortwing is very much a little-known species. Phil Heath hopes his article will encourage people to look out for it.



Rusty-bellied Shortwing Brachypteryx hyperythra (drawing by Craig Robson)

The Shortwings of the genus Brachypteryx comprise five species, distributed from Nepal to the Lesser Sundas. Two of these, the Lesser Shortwing B. leucophrys and White-browed Shortwing B. montana, have wide distributions and are regularly recorded by visitors to suitable forested areas. The White-bellied Shortwing B. major and Gould's Shortwing B. stellata although more locally distributed, can be common in suitable breeding habitat[1,8]. One further species from Sulawesi, the Great Shortwing, is now placed in a separate genus - Heinrichia calligyna[18].

While the first five species are reasonably familiar, the Rusty-bellied Shortwing Brachypteryx hyperythra is known from only a small number of records. Anyone attempting any research will find virtually no information beyond its known distribution in the eastern Himalaya, descriptions of the adult

male and female plumages, and a standard phrase to the effect that it is rare and little known.

The adult male is a brilliant deep blue above, with a short, almost obscured silky-white supercilium ending just short of the eye. The lores are black. The flight feathers and tail are a dull brown but fringed deep blue so that the closed wing and feathers and tail appear blue. The entire underparts and underwing coverts are a bright chestnut, richest on the flanks and slightly less intense on the throat, vent, and undertail coverts. The female is a dusky olive-brown above, with the underparts dull ferruginous apart from an off-white centre to the belly. The lores are tinged ferruginous.

The irides are dark brown and the legs range from fleshy to light horn-brown. The bill has been described as entirely black[1,2,13,14] and although this was the case on four adult males examined in the collection of the British Museum (Natural History), the two females there had dark-brown bills, with the lower mandible slightly paler. Identification of adults should be straightforward. The male on plumage alone could be mistaken for the Indian Blue Robin (Blue Chat) Erithacus brunneus but this has a much more pronounced supercilium, while that of the Rusty-bellied Shortwing is virtually hidden. Shortwings also have a distinctive combination of structural features: short, rounded wings, short almost square-ended tails, and long, smooth, strong legs. This structure and their terrestrial habits should also help to prevent confusion with any of the blue Cyornis/Ficedula flycatchers.

The juvenile plumage is unknown, but is presumably squamated as in the other species of the genus and as in most of the Turdidae. Whether the males acquire a brown female-like plumage before the full blue plumage is also unknown (but see P.J. Heath in prep.). In Lesser and White-browed Shortwings the males often breed in such a plumage and may not attain a blue plumage[1].

The call, song, nest, eggs, breeding, and food are all unknown[1]. It has been recorded in India from the Darjeeling area, Sikkim and Assam, and in China from Yunnan. It was first described in 1861 by Edward Blyth from a female specimen taken at Darjeeling by T.C. Jerdon[3], while the male was described by Hume in 1877 from specimens collected for L. Mandelli in Sikkim[9].

There are six specimens in the collection of the British Museum (Natural History), all procured by Mandelli, details of which are listed in Table 1[6]. Unfortunately neither Hume nor the specimen labels give more exact localities.

Table 1 Specimens of Brachypteryx hyperythra in the collection of the British Museum (Natural History) all collected by L. Mandelli in Sikkim.

British Museum Number	Sex	Age	Date collected
1886-10-1- 230	male	adult	May 1875
237	male	adult	Apr 1876
238	female	adult	Aug 1873
240	female	adult	Oct 1873
241	male	adult	Nov 1873
242	male	adult	Nov 1873

Much of what is known of the habits and behaviour comes from the observations of Herbert Stevens, who lived for over 20 years in Upper Assam and Darjeeling[16,17]. During Stevens' residence in Lakhimpur District, Assam from 1901-11, he recorded five specifically dated individuals from Hessamara and the Rivers Panchnoi and Dejoo at the base of the Dafla Hills, between 30 November and January. He also mentions undated records from Gogaldhubie and Margherita at the base of the Naga Hills[16]. Stevens also observed a male at Tonglo, near Darjeeling at 3000 m (9700 ft) on 27 January 1912[17]. One was collected by G.E. Shaw at Mangpu, Darjeeling at 1,100 m. (3,800 ft) in May 1920[12,17]. The only recent record is of a male and female collected during the period 23-28 May 1973, at Gongshan, north-west Yunnan[15].

The range of records throughout the year for Darjeeling and Sikkim [6,12,17] suggests that it is resident in that area, whereas in Assam Stevens writes of it as occurring only during the cold season[16,17]. It is described as a very rare breeding resident in north-west Yunnan[5], although it is not clear how much of this is assumption.

Ali and Ripley list it as occurring in Arunachal Pradesh[1], but this is a misinterpretation of Stevens' account[16]. It is also listed as occurring in Nagaland by several authors. However, the only record, a bird collected by Godwin-Austen at Asalu, was the result of a misidentification. The bird was described as having 'the entire plumage of a dull indigo, a white streak above the eye'[7]. It was clearly a specimen of B. montana and although the correction of this misidentification was noted by Oates[14], Ali and Ripley[1] followed Hume[10] in perpetuating the error. There is also a specimen at the Hancock Museum, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, labelled solely 'Nepal' (Museum No. B075.80), but this is thought to be unconnected with the two specimens from Stevens' collection housed there[4]. With no further details available, the exact location must remain in doubt. (There are four adult specimens held at the American Museum of Natural History[11] for which details were unavailable at the time of writing.)

Stevens gives us all we know on their wintering habitat. He described them as inhabiting 'undergrowth in forest, thick secondary shrub and dense thickets of reeds'[16]. The single bird he saw at Tonglo was in dense Arundinaria bamboo[1,17].

The only observations on the behaviour of the Rusty-bellied Shortwing also come from Stevens, and he describes the individuals he saw as 'quite fearless'[16,17]. In the spirit of the early ornithologists he says that, as a consequence of this, they were 'most difficult to secure at such close range in a satisfactory condition for a cabinet preparation, unless procured without the aid of powder and shot'[16], and that the effect of using a gun at close quarters 'would certainly have been to the detriment of the specimen'[17].

The Rusty-bellied Shortwing is evidently a very scarce or very local species. The lack of recent records can perhaps be partly explained by its choice of habitat in dense undergrowth and the fact that it inhabits a politically sensitive area. However, it is odd that a bird so distinctive and seemingly so confiding in nature has not apparently been reported recently, even in the Darjeeling and Sikkim area, which has been visited by a number of observers in recent years. Have there been any recent unreported sightings? It would be pleasing to know that a few are still being seen.

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank Graham Cowles and Peter Colston for arranging access to the British Museum (Natural History) collection at Tring, C.C. Brewer at the Hancock Museum, and Tim Inskipp for comments on an earlier draft of this note and for providing references.

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Birdwatching areas

In and Around Quezon National Park

The rapid deforestation on the Philippines' largest island, Luzon, and the threats this poses for its birds are part of an all-too-familiar story in the Oriental region. However, the diversity of the region's birdlife and the localities at which it might be seen are perhaps less widely appreciated. In this article Jelle Scharringa describes one area - the lowland-forest national park at Quezon - and the birds one might hope to find there.

One of the few easily accessible, primary-forest areas on Luzon, Quezon National Park, is situated in the southern-central portion of the island astride the main highway to the south of The Philippines, and little more than a three-hour drive from Manila. It is about 20 km east of Lucena City, while the entrance is just past the tiny village of Malicboy, the park starting where the old road forks off the new main road to cross a range of hills. This steep and narrow road cuts right through the park. Although it is a lowland-forest area it is by no means level; almost all of the forest is situated on quite steep slopes, totally surrounded by the extensive coconut-palm plantations off the flat, coastal plains.

There is no accommodation within the park but there is one expensive hotel, 'Golden Showers', at Malicboy, which has only three rooms. Cheap hotels can be found in Lucena City. There are several express buses from Manila to Lucena daily, and from there local buses pass Malicboy.

In the morning it is best to start walking along the road, going up into the park past the checkpoint. (There is no entrance fee.) For the first 1-2 km the road zigzags up the hillsides, where there is magnificent, tall primary forest all around. The views are excellent into the canopy of the forested slopes opposite, and in the early morning it is very good for birds. The magnificent Rufous Hornbill Buceros hydrocorax, Black-and-white Triller Lalage melanoleuca, Rufous Coucal Centropus unirufus, Philippine Coucal C. viridis, and Blackish Cuckoo-shrike Coracina coerulescens are all usually seen here. (The Philippine Coucal often calls constantly, but can be difficult to see.) The Philippine Hawk-cuckoo Cuculus (fugax) pectoralis and the descending duet-calls of the Spotted Wood-Kingfisher Actenoides lindsayi can often be heard from the middle storey of the forest. Red-striped Flowerpecker Dicaeum australe and Striped-sided Rhabdornis Rhabdornis mystacalis should be looked for high in the canopy, since both are common birds; so too is the beautiful Coleto Sarcops calvus, a bird that behaves like the Hill Myna Gracula religiosa (found only in Palawan). The Tarictic Hornbill Penelopides panini and Philippine Fairy-bluebird Irena cyanogaster are also common. The canopy should also be watched for Green Racket-tail Prioniturus luconensis and the noisy Blue-naped Parrot Tanygnathus lucionensis, while Guaiabero Bolbopsittacus lunulatus and Colasisi Loriculus philippensis frequently fly over, as does the Violet Cuckoo Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus occasionally.

After 2 km one reaches a place with excellent views over the forest, the lowlands, and the sea in the distance. It looks like a good location from which to view raptors and the common Philippine Serpent-Eagle Spilornis holospilus is usually soaring over the trees. Next to a dried-up swimming pool a beautiful and quiet trail enters the forest. From here you can take a set of narrow trails up the ridge, and after an hour's walk meet the 'Summit-trail'. There are several more tracks that branch off and cross narrow streams into the deep forest with dense undergrowth of rattans Calamus. Here, and along the road one can find Scale-feathered Malkoha Phaenicophaeus cumingi and Red-crested Malkoha P. superciliosus, which are both endemic species. The soft but fairly persistent call of the Philippine Trogon Harpactes ardens, and the beautiful, loud, and whinnying song of the White-browed Shama Copsychus luzoniensis can often be heard. This last species is a shy skulker and may be difficult to see. Blue-breasted Pitta Pitta erythrogaster and Ashy Thrush Zoothera cinerea are other birds to look for along the quiet trails, as well as higher up.

The Lemon-throated Warbler Phylloscopus cebuensis nests in the lower storey, as does the Yellow-bellied Whistler Pachycephala philippinensis. The deep, booming call of the Yellow-breasted Fruit-dove Ptilinopus occipitalis and the descending, bubbling call of the White-eared Brown Dove Phapitreron leucotis, the commonest pigeons here, are usually audible in the canopy.

If you continue to follow the main road for another 1-2 km you will reach the highest point. A litle further on, a trail starts to the left at the sign - 'to Pinagbandahan Peak', which at 492 m is the highest summit of the ridge. This is the 'Summit-trail' - a fairly broad path that follows the ridge to the top. The forest is on rocky ground here, with sometimes large boulders strewn over the slope, and is of a more open and dry nature. (Some of the previously mentioned small trails meet this Summit-trail, after a steep climb.) It is a good area for the highly elusive Luzon Bleeding-heart Gallicolumba luzonica, which usually runs quietly away at the slightest disturbance. Here the forest also holds White-bellied Woodpecker Dryocopus javensis, Sooty Woodpecker Mulleripicus funebris, and the commoner Philippine Pygmy Woodpecker Picoides maculatus. On the way back one might hope to see the Philippine Falconet Microhierax erythrogonys, perched on the top of a dead tree during the hot, middle portion of the day.

Other species that are frequently encountered are: Grey-backed Tailorbird Orthotomus derbianus, Yellowish White-eye Zosterops nigrorum, Elegant Tit Parus elegans, Golden-crowned Tree-Babbler Stachyris dennistouni, Yellow-wattled Bulbul Pycnonotus urostictus, and the abundant Philippine Bulbul Hypsipetes philippinus. Finally, the dirty stream behind the 'Golden Showers' sometimes holds a hunting Dwarf River Kingfisher Ceyx cyanopectus, (a bird that looks more like an Alcedo than a Ceyx).

About half-way between Lucena and Malicboy is the small town of Pagbilao, where the nearby fish-ponds and marshes, 2 km to the east and visible from the main road (and across the railroad tracks), are very good. Throughout the year, interesting rallids can be found, such as Buff-banded Rail Rallus philippensis, the stunning Barred Rail R. torquatus, White-browed Crake Porzana cinerea, and Slaty-breasted Rail Rallus striatus. Its most famous bird, however, is the Australian Grass Owl Tyto longimembris which can be seen flying around over the tall reeds at dusk. In addition, this is the time that the Philippine

Nightjar Caprimulgus manillensis starts calling.

At certain times of the year, the Chinese Egret Egretta eulophotes is present among the Little Egrets E. garzetta and is not difficult to identify in full breeding plumage. Some of the ponds are very good for the following waders: Grey-tailed Tattlers Heteroscelus brevipes, Red-necked and Long-toed Stints Calidris ruficollis and C. subminuta, and Greater Sandplover Charadrius leschenaultii. The endemic Philippine Duck Anas luzonica probably breeds here.

Another good place to visit is the campus of the University of The Philippines at Los Banos, on the lower slopes of Mt. Makiling volcano. This is about halfway between Lucena and Manila, in Laguna province. Accommodation is rather difficult to find, but you should make your way through the vast campus grounds to the back of the area, the so-called 'Forestry', where there are some cheap hostels. Here, at night you can hear the screams of the Philippine Eagle-Owl Bubo philippensis, as well as the Philippine Boobook Ninox philippensis. In addition, the Philippine Scops-Owl Otus megalotis, first tape-recorded here by J.T. Marshall about 15 years ago, is probably also not uncommon, but it calls highly irregularly.

The forest starts along the road going up from the back of the campus towards the summit of Mt. Makiling. The Spotted Wood-Kingfisher is common in the dense, mainly secondary forest and most of the commoner forest birds of Quezon National Park can be found here (except perhaps the Rufous Hornbill, a species which requires tall, old fig trees). These include the following species: Blue-breasted Pitta, Lovely Sunbird Aethopyga shelleyi, Flaming Sunbird A. flagrans, Striped Flowerpecker Dicaeum aeruginosum, and White-eared Brown Dove. Grey-backed Tailorbird and Yellow-bellied Whistler are both very common, while Purple Needletails Hirundapus celebensis frequently soar overhead. The elusive Pechora Pipit Anthus gustavi is found here in the winter season.

There are other good areas to see birds on Luzon, but most of them are less accessible. It seems obvious that the natural forest is fast disappearing throughout The Philippines; large areas are already totally deforested and natural habitat is becoming rare. Logging continues apace in the last frontier of Luzon, the Sierra Madre, where the Philippine Eagle Pithecophaga jefferyi still occurs. It is also depressing to see local people with guns, even inside national parks, shooting everything on sight.

Of all the countries I have visited in east Asia, The Philippines seem closest to ecological disaster, and it is not unlikely that some of the above-mentioned endemic species will become extinct in the near future. For example, on the island of Cebu almost all endemic forms are now extinct except for one.

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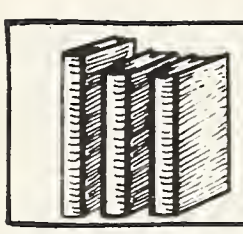


Reviews....Reviews.....

Cheng Tso-hsin 1987. A Synopsis of the Avifauna of China. Pp. 1224; 828 maps; US$163.00.

This most useful book is a revised and enlarged edition of Prof. Cheng's 1976 book, which was inaccessible to many ornithologists as it is written in Chinese. This is the first English language edition and the most comprehensive work yet on the distribution of birds in China. It serves as a complement to Meyer de Schauensee's recent guide[1], which contains descriptions of Chinese birds based on museum specimens.

The book covers all the birds discovered and recorded in China, including Taiwan. It discusses 1,186 species and all the known subspecies, for a total of 2,139 forms belonging to 21 orders, 81 families, and 389 genera. The following information is given for each species: nomenclature - scientific names with synonyms cited in full, Chinese names in Chinese characters, available Russian names in the Russian alphabet, and English names; breeding habitat, especially within the boundaries of China; a discussion of the subspecies found in China; range of distribution with actual collecting localities marked on the accompanying maps, with special symbols for each subspecies and their ranges in China; present status of each species with remarks on obvious changes. The status is classified as follows: common almost throughout China, fairly common, common locally, fairly common locally, more common than previous species, uncommon, rare, very rare, extremely rare, accidental, and vagrant. These terms are not defined.

This book contains the 44 new subspecies named by Chinese ornithologists since the founding of the People's Republic of China, and 20 more species than the 1976 edition. More data have been added on the distributional ranges of birds based on recent expeditions to Tibet, the Gaoligong Mountains in Western Yunnan, and other secluded localities in the interior of China. Meyer de Schauensee[1] lists 1,200* species and in a postscript Prof. Cheng lists the forms treated as species by Meyer de Schauensee but which he feels are only subspecies. He also mentions three species that have only questionable records for China: Variable (Eastern Pied) Wheatear Oenanthe picata, Astley's Leiothrix Leiothrix astleyi, and Racket-tailed Treepie Crypsirina temia.

A very useful section in the introductory part of the book discusses the zoological regions of China and in the back a series of tables lists every species and subspecies with a symbol for its status in each of the 16 zoological regions. The symbols indicate breeding (resident or summer), passing migrants, and vagrants. There is also a gazetteer with translations from English to Chinese, a map and list of all the provinces, and a long list of all the places mentioned in the text. There is an extensive, but incomplete bibliography with references from 1922 up to 1982 when the manuscript was finished.

Prof. Cheng, now in his eighties, is the doyen of Chinese ornithologists and surely one of the greatest biologists in China today. This monumental work is the culmination of an illustrious career.

Nothing comparable to it has ever been published in English for the birds of China. The last such attempts date back to the 1920s and 1930s and dealt mostly with eastern China. Anyone wishing to plan a birdwatching trip to China must use this book in conjunction with The birds of China. Neither of these is a field guide, but until someone does publish such a book, these will be the most useful. Field guides for surrounding areas are available for Japan, the Soviet Union, South-East Asia, Nepal and Thaliand. However, none of these covers all the birds of China where there are almost 100 endemic species.

The book has a few typographical errors, but when you realise that it was translated from the Chinese, published in Beijing, printed in Shanghai, and distributed by a German firm the few errors become insignificant. More important errors are the omission of Jiangxi Province from the wintering ranges of the Hooded Crane Grus monacha and the White-naped Crane G. vipio, and the duplication of the English name Scaly-bellied Green Woodpecker; Picus vittatus should be named Laced (Green) Woodpecker.

It is unfortunate that such a useful book is so expensive, but in any case it will remain the most useful reference to Chinese birds for many years.

1. Meyer de Schauensee, R. (1984) The birds of China. Smithsonian, Washington D.C.

* Note that the introduction refers, inaccurately, to a total of 1,195 (ed.)

Dr Donald H. Messersmith

For the benefit of those who only have access to The birds of China a list is given of the 20 species included by Cheng that were omitted or rejected* by Meyer de Schauensee:-

*Egyptian Goose Alopochen aegyptiacus, Collared Falconet Microhierax caerulescens, Eurasian Capercaillie Tetrao urogallus, Sandhill Crane Grus canadensis, Edible-nest Swiftlet Collocalia fuciphaga, Ward's Trogon Harpactes wardi, Scaly-bellied Woodpecker Picus squamatus, Long-billed Bush-Warbler Bradypterus major, Broad-billed Warbler Tickellia (=Abroscopus) hodgsoni, Wood Warbler Phylloscopus sibilatrix, Pygmy Blue Flycatcher Muscicapella (=Niltava) hodgsoni, Spot-throated Babbler Pellorneum albiventre, Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler Pomatorhinus ferruginosus, Nepal Fulvetta Alcippe nipalensis, Thick-billed Flowerpecker Dicaeum agile, Lesser Grey Shrike Lanius minor, Rufous Treepie Dendrocitta (=Crypsirina) vagabunda, Brahminy Starling Sturnus pagodarum, Vinous-breasted Starling S. burmannicus, Black-breasted Weaver Ploceus benghalensis.

Meyer de Schauensee included 10 species omitted or rejected* by Cheng:- Red-footed Falcon Falco vespertinus (N.B. Amur Falcon is treated as F. v. amurensis by Cheng), Common Ringed Plover Charadrius hiaticula (N.B. Long-billed Plover is treated as C. h. placidus by Cheng), Black-nest Swiftlet Collocalia maxima, Common Redstart Phoenicurus phoenicurus, *Variable Wheatear Oenanthe picata, Song Thrush Turdus philomelos, Astley's Leiothrix Leiothrix astleyi, *Siberian Tit Parus cinctus, *Racket-tailed Treepie Crypsirina temia and *Streaked Weaver Ploceus manyar. The basis for the inclusion of most of these is not referenced and none is adequately documented.

Both authors have apparently overlooked records of Redwing Turdus iliacus from Qinghai (C. Vaurie, 1972, Tibet and its birds), and of Great Skua

Catharacta skua (presumably maccormicki), Parasitic Jaeger Stercorarius parasiticus and Japanese Murrelet Synthliboramphus wumizusume from Taiwan (Yen Chung-wei, 1984, Wild birds of Taiwan. 2. Migrants).

Recent published records of new species include Marbled Teal Marmaronetta angustirostris and Olivaceous Warbler Hippolais pallida from Sinkiang (W.G. Harvey, 1986, Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl. 106; 15) and Pied Heron Egretta picata, Philippine Duck Anas luzonica, Canvasback Aythya valisineria, Buff-breasted Sandpiper Tryngites subruficollis and Ryukyu Robin Erithacus komadori from Taiwan (Anon., 1987, The checklist of the birds of Taiwan).

Tim Inskipp

Van Marle, J.G. & Voous, K.H. 1988. **The Birds of Sumatra.** An Annotated Check-list. Pp265; 9 tables, 18 black & white photos, B.O.U. Check-list No. 10, British Ornithologists Union, London.

Following closely on the heels of The birds of Wallacea[1], The Birds of Sumatra is another welcome and invaluable contribution to the ornithology of the Indomalayan (Oriental) Region[2].

The book is introduced by a series of comprehensive summaries (50 pages), which provide an ecological, geographical, and historical background to the avifauna. These summaries include a useful discussion of avian endemism, as well as a set of plates illustrating vegetation types described in the text. Although the book contains a comprehensive gazetteer, there are only two small and rather poorly drawn maps of Sumatra. The map showing vegetation types is disappointingly inaccurate, and gives a rather over-optimistic impression of the extent of Sumatra's dwindling forests.

The systematic check-list (154 pages), describes the status, geographical and altitudinal ranges, habitat preferences, and breeding records of the 600 bird species known from the island of Sumatra and its numerous satellite islands. My only criticism of the check-list is that there is no information on extralimital distribution, which would have added a useful zoogeographical perspective. The annotated check-list is supplemented by a summary list of the birds and a bibliography of 407 references.

Despite a history of ornithological exploration dating back to the early nineteenth century, the birds of the Indonesian island of Sumatra and its satellites are poorly known. This is well illustrated by the fact that there are no breeding records for 47 per cent of the (presumed) indigenous breeding birds, and that three of the 12 endemic mainland species have not been recorded for 50 or more years (a fourth species, Salvadori's Pheasant Lophura inornatas, has recently been observed on Mt. Kerinci after a gap of 72 years). Several species, such as the enigmatic Rueck's Blue Flycatcher Cyornis ruecki and Blue wattled Bulbul Pycnonotus nieuwenhuisii are known from only one or two specimens. The taxonomy of a number of species is inadequately studied and future work may well add to the list of recognised Sumatran endemics.

Coming at a time when deforestation is accelerating throughout the Indonesian archipelago, the paucity of knowledge highiighted by this book will

surely provide an incentive for future ornithological research. Although this book is not a field guide, it will enable birdwatchers visiting this fascinating area to readily pinpoint bird records of interest, and it will hopefully encourage a surge of interest amongst the more ambitious travellers of societies such as OBC.
Frank Lambert

1 White, C.M.N. & Bruce, M.D. (1986) The birds of Wallacea. B.O.U. Check-list 7. British Ornithologists' Union, London.

2 Clark, G.A. et al. (1988) Indomalayan Region: a substitute name for Wallace's Oriental Region. Ibis 130; 447.

Inskipp, Carol 1988. **A Birdwatcher's Guide to Nepal.** Pp. 119; 11 vignettes; 21 maps; Prion Ltd., Sandy. £8.75.

This excellent pocket-sized book is the first of a new series of books containing site information and travel hints to the best birdwatching countries. It begins with some very useful sections concerning travelling to and within Nepal, from obtaining visa extensions to the cost of hiring a motor cycle (I wonder if the author has actually hired one!), and health problems. The introductory page alone contains a wealth of potted information from a summary of Nepalese politics over the centuries to informing us that this tiny kingdom has over 840 bird and 6,000 plant species. The early chapters are so useful that a birdwatching visitor can almost dispense with taking other travel guides, which can often contain too much detail for a person already weighed down with books.

The main part of the book consists of details, usually accompanied by clear sketch maps, of the best birdwatching sites in the country. These are divided between sites which can be reached by road, thus suitable for fast-travelling birdwatchers, and treks for those lucky enough to have more time to spend in this fabulous country.

Each account describes the features of the area, the best birds to look out for, and tips on getting about and finding accommodation and food. The coverage given to each site varies according to habitat variety, from a couple of paragraphs for those worthy of short stops to five pages for some of the reserves. The trek sections are equally as informative and it is gratifying to see some realistic timings between villages, which allow for bird stops en route - in most trekking guides I have used the times given seem to have been compiled by joggers.

The final sections of the book consist of a series of chapters on relevant societies, a short bibliography, a chapter on the status of a selected number of 'scarce' species, and check-lists of Nepalese birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. My only grumble is the English names used for many birds, which for many people are basically 'new' and unfamiliar, even though they were used in the same author's indispensable A guide to the birds of Nepal. However, no doubt these names will be in full usage by the end of the century when my grumble will be invalid. Luckily the user can quickly refer to the check-list at the back of the book to compare scientific names with those used in other references (perhaps to have numbered the species in the check-list and then used

the same numbers against the names in the text would have been of extra help in this respect).

Anyone birdwatching in Nepal, whether resident there or merely visiting, should get a copy. I hope the standard achieved in both content and presentation will be followed by the forthcoming volumes in the series - those promised in the near future include India, Morocco, and The Netherlands.

This book is available from OBC sales price £8.75 or 10.25 if posted airmail (eds.)

Steve Madge

Announcements & Requests

Help with tit, nuthatch and creeper guide wanted

Tape recordings and photographs of tits, nuthatches, and creepers are requested for an identification guide currently in preparation. All species in the families Aegithalidae (long-tailed tits), Remizidae (penduline tits), Paridae (tits), Sittidae (nuthatches), Tichodromadidae (Wallcreeper), Certhiidae (treecreepers), Salpornithidae (Spotted Creeper), and Rhabdornithidae (Philippine creepers) are to be treated. Material received will be returned if requested and fully acknowledged. Please contact Simon Harrap, 23 Folgate Road, Heacham, King's Lynn, UK, PE31 7BQ.

Advice on Visits to Indonesia

If visiting Indonesia purely as bona fide tourists, most nationalities can obtain a 60-day visa on arrival at the international entry point, provided they can show a return ticket. In general there are no restrictions as to where they may visit; where political restrictions do apply (e.g. East Timor), they will soon be told. Permits are required to visit national parks and are available to tourists either in the provincial capital concerned or sometimes at the park entrance. According to the regulations no one is permitted to enter Strict Nature Reserves without a research permit, although in some cases this might not be a problem.

Those who come to discuss conservation or research issues with the authorities in any context are advised to obtain a Visit Visa from their country of origin before departure. These are valid for four or five weeks and can be renewed. (Tourist visas issued on arrival CANNOT be extended).

A research permit is required for work under university or museum

expeditions, ICBP-sponsored projects etc., and also for activities such as netting, banding, using hides for photography etc. Applications should be made to the National Institute of Sciences (LIPI) as far in advance as possible, preferably at least a year (location of project may influence time required to process visas).

It is also a regulation that every visitor reports to the police wherever he stays overnight. In practice, this is not necessary in main cities and tourist areas. Elsewhere, your small hotel will advise whether this is necessary, and will often do it on your behalf. At small domestic airports, you will usually also need to register at the airport police post.

Most small towns have one or two small hotels ('losmen', 'penginapan', 'wisma') which are cheap, friendly, and sometimes surprisingly good. The OBC Representatives would like to build up a register of recommended small hotels and would welcome visitors' reports. They would also welcome visitors' tour reports, especially if they contain practical tips (transport, places to stay, permits etc.) of use to future visitors. Bird lists should preferably be on a site-by-site basis; at least, please do not combine different islands on one list.
Derek Holmes, Bas van Balen

Turdidae research : sounds and pictures wanted

Photographs and tape recordings of any species in the family Turdidae (shortwings, robins, shamas, redstarts, chats, wheatears, rock-thrushes, whistling-thrushes, ground-thrushes, thrushes etc.) are wanted for a major research project. Material received will, of course, be fully acknowledged. Contact Nigel Redman, Holly Bank, Grindleton, Clitheroe, Lancashire, UK, BB7 4QT.

Fauna Sinica Volume Available

We are pleased to announce the recent publication of the comprehensive work Fauna Sinica, Aves, vol. 11: Muscicapidae 2. Timaliinae by Professor Cheng Tso-hsin, Ornithological Society of China.

Information Wanted on Fig Parrots

I am working on a monograph of the Fig Parrots (Opopsitta and Psittaculirostris). I would like to obtain any information on these birds such as habitat, behaviour, nesting including eggs. Contributions will receive credit in the monograph. Please send information to: Jan Roger van Oosten, 8023 17th N.E., Seattle, WA 98115, USA.

Woodpecker Pictures Wanted

Slides of woodpeckers Picidae from around the world are required for a collection by Bdr. McMullan, who is prepared to pay for slides provided. For more information contact him at Headquarter Battery, 49 F. Regt. Royal Artillery, BFPO 107, UK.

Hong Kong Bird Report 1986 out Now

This 112-page issue contains summaries of the most interesting records for 1986 and additions and corrections to the 1986 Annotated Checklist (reviewed in Bull. OBC 6; 26-7). It also includes papers on no less than nine new species for Hong Kong; a review of the identification and status of Nordmann's Greenshank Tringa

guttifer, and observations on the birds of Hei Shi Ding Nature Reserve, Guandong province, China. Hong Kong Birdwatching Society. GPO Box 124 600, Hong Kong.

Subsciption offer for British Birds

Please find enclosed a leaflet offering a reduced-rate subscription to the excellent monthly journal, British Birds. The publication frequently has material concerning Oriental birds. During the last year there were identification papers on Radde's Warbler Phylloscopus schwarzi and Dusky Warbler Phylloscopus fuscatus, large terns including Great Crested Tern Sterna bergii and Lesser Crested Tern Sterna bengalensis, and on Pechora Pipit Anthus gustavi. There were also papers on the taxonomic status of the Lesser Golden Plovers Pluvialis dominica and Pluvialis fulva, and the taxonomy of the Rock/Water Pipit superspecies Anthus petrosus, spinoletta and rubescens, as well as a useful discussion letter on Phylloscopus taxonomy, referring especially to inornatus and humei.

Help Wanted with New Guide

Photographs are required for reference by artist Jeff Davies who is illustrating the first volume of the forthcoming four-volume series entitled The Handbook of the Birds of Australia, New Zealand and Antarctica. The illustrations will be painted but photographs are needed to help with details on plumage, soft-part colouration, and posture of the following species: adult and juveniles of Malay Night Heron Gorsachius melanolophus, Ruddy-breasted Crake Porzana fusca, Red-legged Crake Rallina fasciata, and Watercock Gallicrex cinerea; and juvenile and downy young of White-browed Crake Porzana cinerea.

Cost of duplication of slides or pictures would be paid and due acknowledgement given in the book. If you can help, please contact Jeff Davies, 26 Dresden Street, Heidelberg Heights, Victoria 3086, Australia.

Kukila - Subscribe Now

Subscribers who have not yet renewed their subscription to Kukila for Volume 4 are invited to do so as soon as possible, and new subscribers are also needed. The first issue is scheduled for Autumn 1988 and will contain main features on Wallacea, among others. The rate per volume is $10 or equivalent (currently £6 in sterling), but please add $3 (£1.80) for bank charges. Cheques or drafts, in any currency, should be made payable to D.A. Holmes and forwarded to Kukila, PO Box 287/KBY, Jakarta, Indonesia. Back issues are available, either individually at $4 each (incl. postage), or at the subscription rate of $10 per full volume while stocks last.

Java and Bali Records Request

All those who have new or interesting observations from the islands of Java and Bali (especially recent observations from little-known areas), are invited to send their information to the compiler of a Check-list of the Birds of Java and Bali, (to be published as one of the British Ornithologists' Union's Check-list series). Dr J.H. Becking, 7 Ericalaan, 6703 EM Wageningen, The Netherlands. Any information will of course be very welcome, and all records will be fully acknowledged.

Hyderabad-based Bird Society

Hyderabad is home to the Birdwatching Society of Andhra Pradesh. The society organises a busy monthly programme of meetings and field trips and produces a regular bulletin containing recent reports as well as information on local conservation, and other news. To find out how to join contact: Siraj A. Taher, 6-3-249/3, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India.

Wildlife Society in Jaipur

The Tourism and Wildlife Society of India, based in Jaipur, Rajasthan, runs special-interest tours of north-west India and holds a programme of meetings and talks in the area on various wildlife topics. The Society can provide specialist leaders for tours of Bharatpur and other national parks in the area, including some of the Project Tiger reserves, and assists visitors in arranging their park visits and accommodation. For details, contact: Harsh Vardhan, Tourism and Wildlife Society of India, C-158A, Dayanand Marg, Tilak Nagar, Jaipur 302 004, India.

Thanks for Information

I would like to thank all those who responded to my request for information on birds in the Western Himalayas (Bull. OBC 4; 23). In the event I received lists only for Jammu and Kashmir. As a check-list of the birds of that state is being prepared by Peter Holmes and Anthony Parr (see same Bulletin), I have dropped the idea of a general check-list for the Western Himalayas and have passed on to Holmes and Parr all the records that I received. In due course I hope to prepare a list for the state of Himachal Pradesh only and I would still appreciate any recent lists from that area.
Tony Gaston, 174-11 Dufferin Road, Ottawa, Canada, K1M 2A6.

Field Help Required in Malaysia

If you live in Malaysia, or are planning to travel to the country, and would like to help with an important conservation project then read on. Help is needed between February and May 1989 (for 1-2 month periods) to help with monitoring the calling behaviour of the Malaysian Peacock Pheasant Polyplectron malacense and with radio tracking the species. The study site is an area of primary lowland forest at Lompat in the Krau Game Reserve, Peninsular Malaysia. Accommodation costs, and probably living expenses, will be covered by the project. If you are interested, please write to Philip McGowan, Biology Dept., the Open University, Milton Keynes, UK, MK7 6AA.

'To the Editor'

Seasonal Status of Mongolian Finch in Ladakh

In their comment on the first records of Linnet Carduelis cannabina in Ladakh in early summer 1982, Williams and Delaney (Bull. OBC 3; 14) stated: 'Mongolian Finches Rhodopechys mongolica, which are usually winter visitors to Ladakh, were quite common at this time'. Mallon (Forktail 3; 38) provisionally gave the species' status in Ladakh as a winter visitor, after recording Mongolian Finches in three of the four winters during his study. The Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan describes the species as a winter visitor (October to May) to Ladakh, but also mentions a record from there in August and a juvenile obtained at Leh in September. On 2 August 1987 I saw and photographed Mongolian Finches near Leh (3,500 m). The birds were in several scattered small flocks totalling at least 20. I was not able to establish whether or not any of the birds were juveniles but the size of the flocks suggested tht they may have been family parties (winter flocks are said normally to number 20-30 birds) and Black-winged Snowfinches Montifringilla adamsi and Fire-fronted Serins Serinus pusillus present in the same area were certainly still engaged in breeding or post-breeding activities (respectively visiting the nest and feeding with fledged young). It follows that, as well as being winter visitors to Ladakh, Mongolian Finches are also occasional summer visitors and in such years may breed.

Andrew Harrop, 16 Yeo Close, Efford, Plymouth, UK, PL3 6ER.

Notes on a Visit to Tawi-Tawi Island, The Philippines

For those wishing to seek out the Sulu Hornbill Anthracoceros montani, it still survives in Balabek forest near Barrio Lakit-Lakit on Sanga-Sanga Island. We therefore assume the population to be stable on the mainland of Tawi-Tawi where extensive forest still exists.

Other birds of interest were Rufous-lored Kingfisher Halcyon winchelli, Ruddy Kingfisher Halcyon coromanda, Pied Imperial Pigeon Ducula bicolor, Blue-naped parrot Tanygnathus lucionensis, and Dark-eared Dove Phapitreron cinereiceps.

Several illegal logging tracks lead into the forest and one must proceed c. 1.5 km into the interior beyond the areas disturbed by the logging to find the hornbill known locally as the kalaw. The bird started calling c. 09hr00 with a distinctive cackling typical of the genus and once heard was easy to find. Two birds were heard and one was seen.

People to contact who can help provide access are Sanhussin Bangali and Gapaluddin J. Aluddin (nicknamed Gapa) of Barrio Lakit-Lakit. A vehicle can be rented from Barrio Lakit-Lakit for US$10, which will provide access to and from the main town of Bongao. Hotel accommodation is available at the Southern Hotel in Bongao for US$3 a night and the food is good. Warning: Philippine Airlines flies to Tawi-Tawi (Sanga-Sanga Airport) every day provided

the weather is good. If it rains, the Sanga-Sanga airstrip will close!

On the boat trip from Tawi-Tawi back to Zamboanga, Mindanao, we located a major wintering area for the Red-necked Phalarope Phalaropus lobatus between Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga, Mindanao, where c. 1,500-2,000 were seen. Other birds of note were one adult Parasitic Jaegar Stercorarius parasiticus perhaps the first Philippine record, three Pomarine Jeagars S. pomarinus, (two adults and one juvenile), and many Streaked Shearwaters Calonectris leucomelas.

Ron Krupa, PO Box 246, Davao City, Mindanao, The Philippines.
Hugh Buck, PO Box 544, 46700 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.

Recent Reports

These are largely unconfirmed reports covering the period from March to September 1988. We urge that full details be supplied to relevant regional organisation in due course.

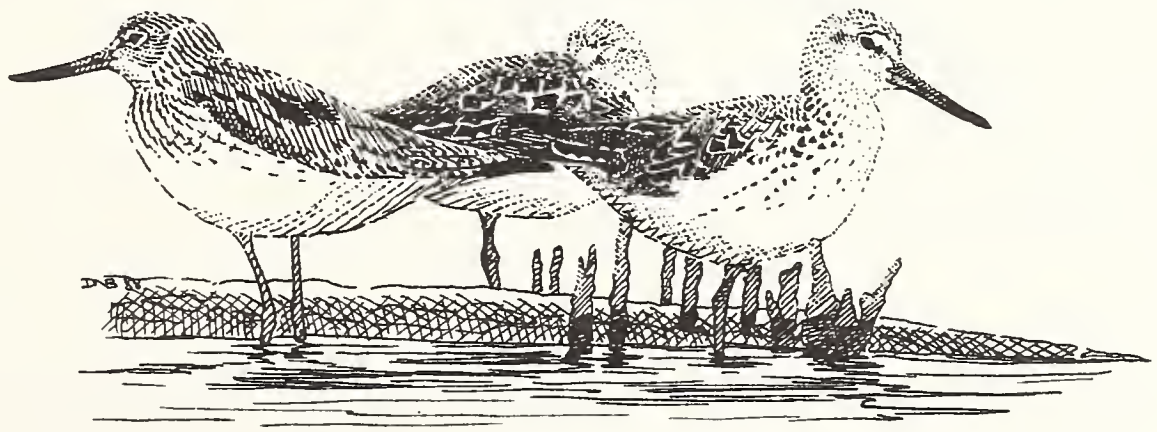
CHINA

News on observations of migrating birds at Beidahe, Hebei province was received from MW for the period 16 March - 3 April: Crane Grus numbers were generally low, partly due to unsuitable weather conditions in eastern China during the period of observation. The following totals were recorded: 2,384 Common Crane G. grus, 53 White-naped Crane G. vipio, 156 Red-crowned Crane G. japonensis (a reasonable total), and 33 Siberian Crane G. leucogeranus. Only 19 Oriental Storks Ciconia boyciana were recorded and 47 Swan Geese Anser cygnoides. Also recorded were 2,754 Bean Geese Anser fabalis. Great Bustards Otis tarda numbered 103 and a single Saker Falcon Falco cherrug was seen. Only 14 Rooks Corvus frugilegus were counted, further indicaton of a drastic decline since the 1940s. There were 338 unidentified Rook/Carrion Crows Corvus corone. A visit to Feng Xin, south of Shanghai on 29 April by PK resulted in some very interesting records. Over 20 Black-browed Parrotbills Paradoxornis heudei were found along with at least ten singing male Japanese Marsh-Warblers Megalurus pryeri. One individual of the latter species was observed carrying nesting material, possibly confirming breeding well to the south of the known range of this species. Interesting records have also been received from Xinjiang province. A single Houbara Bustard Chlamydotis undulata near Aqal on 27 June (RG, HT) may well have been a breeding bird. Three probable Collared Pratincoles Glareola pratincola seen at Kashi on 21 June (RG, HT) would be new for China if confirmed. Four or five Savi's Warblers Locustella luscinioides at Kashi and one or two at Bosten Hu, near Korla (RG, HT) which were seen and

tape-recorded, represent a new Chinese record. Eight to ten European Reed Warblers Acrocephalus scirpaceus at Kashi, including adults feeding young, and two at Bosten Hu near Korla (RG, HT), were the first to be proved breeding in China, and only the second record. Encouraging were 12 Black-necked Cranes Grus nigricollis at Qinghai Hu (Koko Nor), Qinghai on 14 August (RG, HT). The same observers counted 850-1,000 Bar-headed Geese Anser indicus, including many goslings, at the same locality.

HONG KONG

A Japanese Night-Heron Gorsachius goisagi, which flew into a window in Kowloon, was released at Tai Po Kau on 21 April (DM). Equally unusual was a Schrenck's Bittern Ixobrychus eurhythmus in Victoria Barracks on 27 April (RL). This species was also found at Wah Fu on 1 April (SPS). Forty-two Black-faced Spoonbills Platalea minor at Mai Po on 23 March (RL) constituted a high count, suggesting that the birds may have been migrants. Flocks of 27 and 13 Crested Honey-Buzzards Pernis ptilorhyncus were recorded at Tsim Bei Tusi on 4 April (RT, JF), representing the third Hong Kong record. An immature Mountain Hawk-Eagle Spizaetus nipalensis seen well at Luk Keng on 7 May was the first confirmed record for Hong Kong (PK, DB et al.). There was a good passage of Chinese Goshawks Accipiter soloensis, including 100 at Tsim Bei Tsui on 24 April (GC). Spring wader passage was very good this year with record counts for several species during the period March-May. A total of at least 60 Nordmann's Greenshanks Tringa guttifer was recorded with a record peak count of 27 at Mai Po on 16 April (PK, MT). There was a minimum of 19 Spoon-billed Sandpipers Eurynorhynchus pygmeus, with a maximum day total of five at Mai Po on 9 April (PK, MT). Most interesting was the total of 11 Little Stints Calidris minuta with a maximum day count of four at Tsim Bei Tsui on 17 April (mostly DB, PK, MT). Other notable high wader counts at Mai Po included 167 Asian Dowitchers Limnodromus semipalmatus on 22 April, 44 Far Eastern Curlews Numenius madagascariensis on 19 April (DB) and 290 Great Knot Calidris tenuirostris on 11



Common Greenshank Tringa nebularia (left) and Nordmann's Greenshanks Tringa Guttifer (right). Drawing by Dave Bakewell.

April (JH). There were c. 3,000 Red-necked Phalaropes Phalaropus lobatus in the East Lamma Channel on 14 April (DB). A Long-billed Dowitcher Limnodromus scolopaceus in breeding plumage was reported from Mai Po on 18 April (RW, ML).

Numbers of Saunders's Gull Larus saundersi remained high in the early spring with over 80 in Deep Bay on 20 March (MW, FB, CL). A party of Eurasian Penduline Tits Remiz pendulinus was present in reedbeds near the hides at Mai Po from late March through early April, reaching a peak of c. 12 towards the end of their stay (MT, FW et al.).

Two Black-backed Wagtails Motacilla lugens were found on Lamma Island on 19 March (DB) and a Yellow-headed Wagtail Motacilla citreola turned up at Tsim Bei Tsui on 20 April (WY et al.), with possibly a second bird on the 23 April (MC, MT). Up to four Pechora Pipits Anthus gustavi at the same locality on 7-8 April (PK, DB et al.) were also noteworthy.

In the Lam Tsuen valley singles of Siberian Thrush Zoothera sibirica (CV) and Siberian Blue Robin Erithacus cyane (MT) were reported on the 6 and 8 April respectively. The male Bull-headed Shrike Lanius bucephalus at the Chinese University was reported regularly during the second half of March (RL et al.) and a Burmese Shrike Lanius collurioides at Mount Davis on 30 March (SPS, SS) was a new record for Hong Kong. A Gould's Sunbird Aethopyga gouldiae, which turned up in the winter, was still present at Tai Po Kau until at least the 12 March (KS). A total of at least 20 Japanese Yellow Buntings Emberiza sulphurata was reported during the spring (per PK).

Japanese Yellow Bunting Emberiza sulphurata. Drawing by Dave Bakewell.

INDIA

A visit to Ladakh in May by DM and NM produced two good sightings: a Pied Avocet Recurvirostra avosetta flying west along the Indus river east of Tikse and a male Ortolan Bunting Emberiza hortulana feeding with House Sparrows Passer domesticus at Shey, both on the 19th. The latter record is the first for Ladakh.

INDONESIA

Bali

Two Pallas's Warblers Locustella certhiola reported from Lake Buyan on 18 April (TA) appear to be the first recorded for the island. Bali Starling Leucopsar rothschildi numbers in the Bali Barat NP were reported to be down to 35!

Java

Scarce species observed on Java this spring included an adult summer Chinese Egret Egretta eulophotes near Pangandaran, west Java on 12 April and a Malayan Night-Heron Gorsachius melanolophus in Bogor Botanical Gardens on 2 April (TA). Interesting species seen at Cibodas NP were a single Dusky Woodcock Scolopax saturata on 4 April (TA), two Yellow-throated Hanging Parrots Loriculus pusillus (which were thought no longer to occur), on 3 April (TA), a pair of Black-thighed Falconets Microhierax fringillarius and two Asian House Martins Delichon dasypus (both new reserve records) on 4-5 April (TA), an adult Javan Cochoa Cochoa azurea feeding young, and two Indonesian Serins Serinus estherae both on 5 April (TA). At the same locality in early April, a probable Brown-streaked Flycatcher Muscicapa williamsoni and the occupied nest of Snowy-browed Flycatcher Ficedula hyperythra (JH) were noteworthy.

Sumatra

An adult White-winged Duck Cairina scutulata accompanying two young in the Way Kambas reserve on 29 March (TA) was a rare sighting, as were 3-4 Swinhoe's Snipe Gallinago megala in paddy-fields around Gunung Kerinci, Bengkulu on 23 March (TA).

THAILAND

A single Christmas Frigatebird Fregata andrewsi over the Chiew Larn Dam, Khlong Saeng WS, southern Thailand on 14 may (PJ) was an interesting inland record.

Two Spot-billed Pelicans Pelecanus philippensis were reported from Khao Sam Roi Yot NP on 24 March (NPD), and 26 birds presumed to be this species were observed at Laem Talumphuk, Nakhon Si Thammarat on 30 August (BA). Schrenck's Bittern Ixobrychus eurhythmus was recorded regularly during the spring at Khao Phra Bang Khram NHA, Krabi, with one or two seen daily from 25 March to mid-April (RL). Two Greater Adjutants Leptoptilos dubius flew over Khao Yai NP on 8 December (LJ) and an immature Black-faced Spoonbill Platalea minor seen in Pattani Bay, southern Thailand on 29 February and 2 March (SA) was a new record for the country.

In Thung Yai WS, south-west Thailand, at least three White-winged Ducks Cairina scutulata were seen during March and April (SN, NP), and six Lesser Fish-Eagles Ichthyophaga humilis were found along 20 km of waterway on 5-6 April (PR, UT).

Two pairs of Ferruginous Wood-Partridge Caloperdix oculea seen well in Bung Kroeng Kavia NHA, Kanchanaburi on 27 August (TD, RK, WO, UT) represent a considerable northward extension for the species. At the same locality 2-4 Plain-pouched Hornbills Rhyticeros subruficollis were found during

March-April and an occupied nest, probably the first ever described, discovered on 9 April (WK, SP, AT). The nest site had apparently been deserted when revisited in May. Two Mountain Bamboo-Partridges Bambusicola fytchii found on Doi Suthep, Chiang Mai on 14 March (BB) were the first ever seen on the mountain, although a single bird was heard calling there in July 1987 (CR). This species appears to be spreading with deforestation.

Masked Finfoot Heliopais personata was present again at the Krabi mangroves, southern Thailand, with 2-3 seen regularly from March to 30 April, and still reported by local boatmen, but more secretive, in mid summer (many obs.). Early spring and autumn-passage dates for Asian Dowitcher Limnodromus semipalmatus at Samut Sakhon were 21 March (BB) and 4 September (PR, AjT, UT).

Another new record for Thailand came from Ko Pi Pi, Krabi, on 15-16 April when at least three adult Long-tailed Jaegers Stercorarius longicaudus were seen (MC, SR).

A single Malaysian Honeyguide Indicator archipelagicus observed in the Umphang district of Thung Yai WS on 3 April (SN, PR, UT) corroborates an earlier and apparently anomalous record given in Deignan (1963).

Two pairs of White-tailed Flycatchers Cyornis concreta found at Bung Kroeng Kavia NHA during March-May (BBC) served to fill in a gap in the range of this species between Burma and Malaysia. Interesting sundaic species discovered at this locality so far this year include Chestnut-breasted Malkoha Phaenicophaeus curvirostris and Green Broadbill Calyptomena viridis (BBC).

The first occupied nest of Giant Pitta Pitta caerulea to be documented, was located at Khao Phra Bang Khram NHA, Krabi on 22 July, containing two eggs. Two young were reported leaving the nest on 15 August (LB et al.). Other interesting additions to the avifauna of this lowland-forest reserve this year included Ferruginous Wood-Partridge Caloperdix oculea, Jambu Fruit-Dove Ptilinopus jambu, Gould's Frogmouth Batrachostomus stellatus and Chestnut-capped Thrush Zoothera interpres. A single migrant Narcissus Flycatcher Ficedula narcissina on 27-28 April (AM, RF) was also noteworthy.

Records were collated by Craig Robson from observations and contributions by the following: B. Amget (BA), T. Andrews (TA), S. Ardseungnern (SA), D. Bakewell (DB), Bangkok Bird Club (BBC), British Birds Tour (BB), Lung Beung (LB), T. Devakul (TD), R. Fairbank (RF), R. Grimmett (RG), Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (GC, MC, JF, JH, ML, RL, MT, RT, KS, SPS, SS, CV, FW, RW, WY), J. Hornbuckle (JH), L. Jones (LJ), R. Kanjanavanit (RK), P. Kennerley (PK), W. Kongtong (WK), D. & N. Massie (DM & NM), D. Melville (DM), A. Moon (AM), S. Nakhasathien (SN), National Parks Division (Thailand NPD), W. Onganunkun (WO), S. Pakdeephuvadol (SP), N. Phumpakapun (NP), C. Robson (CR), S. Rooke (SR), P. Round (PR), H. Taylor (HT), A. Traipakvasin (AjT), A. Triyan (AT), U. Treesucon (UT), M. Williams (MW).

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Whilst the Editor is always pleased to discuss possible contributions with potential authors, and to advise on preparation, it would be helpful if the following guidelines could be adhered to:

1. Articles These should be written clearly, preferably typed, on one side of the page, with all lines double-spaced, leaving wide margins, and should be no longer than 2000 words. Scientific names should appear at the first mention of each species or, if all species appear in a table, they may be given there instead. Scientific names should, where possible, follow King et al. 1975 'A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia'.

   Any tables to accompany articles should be prepared on separate pieces of paper, and be thoroughly checked. Titles of tables should be self-explanatory. Diagrams should be clearly drawn, in ink, ideally 15cm wide and 11cm high. References should be cited in alphabetical order at the end of the paper in the same style used in this Bulletin.

   It would be helpful if two copies of each contribution could be submitted.

2. Recent reports These should follow the format in the current edition of the OBC Bulletin, and be sent to C.Robson, OBC, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds. SG19 2DL, UK.

3. News/Information Typed or hand-written contributions should be sent to R.Grimmett, OBC, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds. SG 19 2DL, UK.

Although every effort is made to retain all articles in their submitted form, the Editorial Committee reserves the right to make changes that it deems necessary, and, in a minimum of cases, without prior reference to the author. It is assumed that all contributors submitting material understand and accept these conditions.

For News and Views, book reviews, announcements and letters, the deadline for submission of material is 1 March (spring bulletin) and 1 September (autumn bulletin). Recent reports are needed one month earlier. The deadlines do not apply to the main articles which will be published as soon as possible after acceptance by the Editorial Committee.

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